



## FLEX Your Options

Challenge participation and support continues to grow! Consider this encouraging note from an employee of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

*"Please don't stop this program after November 26! It is best incentive I've ever had to keep fit..."*

We want others to have the same experience and incentive as the NOAA employee. To be sure that can happen, **the Challenge has been extended**. That's right. If you haven't heard already, the registration deadline has been extended to **October 29**, and the program will now end **December 10**, using the **Challenge Web site**.

Read on to track the agency stats, learn how to put a little pep in your step, and other helpful info.



### The Top 3 Agencies\*

\*Percentage of all agency employees participating in the Challenge

1. National Science Foundation - 16.5%
2. Farm Credit Association - 14.6%
3. OPM - 12.5%

*See below for a list of the top 10 agencies.*



### FEATURE ARTICLE

#### Put a Little Bounce in Your Step

Physical activity should be fun, something you look forward to; not something to avoid. If you ever had an unpleasant experience when trying to become more active, don't let it stop you this time. You are not destined to repeat what happened in the past.

Here are 10 ways to help make physical activity fun. Put a little pep in your step and a smile on your face!

1. Organize a walking group with co-workers or friends. Enjoy the fresh air and one another's company, while building a support network to help maintain a healthy habit.
2. Give your four-legged friend a little more exercise and fresh air. A walk with your dog is a great way to enjoy your pet, meet your neighbors and take a couple of good walks every day.
3. Don't have a dog? Volunteer to walk dogs for a local animal shelter or borrow your neighbor's dog.
4. Discover a trail by a stream, river or reservoir. The National Park Service Web site ([www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)) has a tool to help you find a park or trail to meet your specific activity interests.
5. Take children with you and sing rounds of nonsense songs with them.
6. Promise yourself a reward. Put \$1 in a jar each day you are physically active. When you "raise" a certain amount, spend the money on yourself. How about buying a book, a professional massage, or a new pair of walking shoes?
7. Use a bicycle with an odometer to measure 1- to 5-mile loops so you always have a distance that fits your schedule
8. Buy a portable audiocassette, CD or MP3 player and listen to your favorite music as you walk. Remove your headphones in any risky areas or near traffic so you can stay fully aware of your surroundings.
9. Walk to the local mail facility to send correspondence.
10. Participate in a run/walk/bike for a good cause. Doing something good for others can be a great motivator to train and compete – or just participate – in an event.

### ★ FUELING YOUR ACTIVITY



#### SMOOTHIE

1. Place a 16 ounce can of drained peaches, 1 1/2 cartons (8 ounce) of low-fat peach yogurt, 3/4 cup orange juice, 1 cup skim milk and 8-10 ice cubes in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Pour into a to-go cup.
4. Pack small bags full of soy nuts and baby carrots to round out your meal.

### ★ TAKE A MINUTE TO STRETCH



1. While sitting, lock hands behind head
2. Bring elbows back as far as possible
3. Inhale deeply while leaning back and stretching
4. Hold for 20 seconds
5. Exhale and relax
6. Repeat 1 time

Source: <http://www.nih.gov/od/ors/ds/ergonomics/exercises.html>

### ★ AGENCY STANDINGS

1. National Science Foundation - 16.5%
2. Farm Credit Administration - 14.6%
3. Office of Personnel Management - 12.5%
4. Nuclear Regulatory Commission - 7%
5. State- 6%
6. Health and Human Services- 5.6%
7. Smithsonian- 5.5%
8. National Aeronautics and Space Admin- 5.4%
9. Commerce- 5.35%
10. General Services Administration - 4.5%

★ THIS WEEK'S HEALTH TIP ★

Stop and take an activity break for every 2 to 3 hours of sitting.



*The article "Put a Little Bounce in Your Step" and "Fueling Your Activity" content is the intellectual property of Group Health Plan, Inc., of Minnesota, a subsidiary of HealthPartners, Inc., and, therefore, protected. The dissemination of these materials by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should not be construed as an endorsement of the views expressed herein, or the general policies, activities, or products of HealthPartners and/or Group Health Plan, Inc.*

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